

# State Vocational Federation of Teachers

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Testimony of John Sylvestre, Electrical Department Head at  
Ella Grasso Technical High School  
State Vocational Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 4200A

## **SB 379 An Act Concerning Vocational-Technical Schools**

Education Committee  
March 8, 2010

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee,

My name is John Sylvestre and I am the Electrical Department Head at Ella T. Grasso Technical High School. I want to take a moment to applaud the efforts of this committee to help our system obtain the necessary funding to maintain the buildings and equipment in our schools.

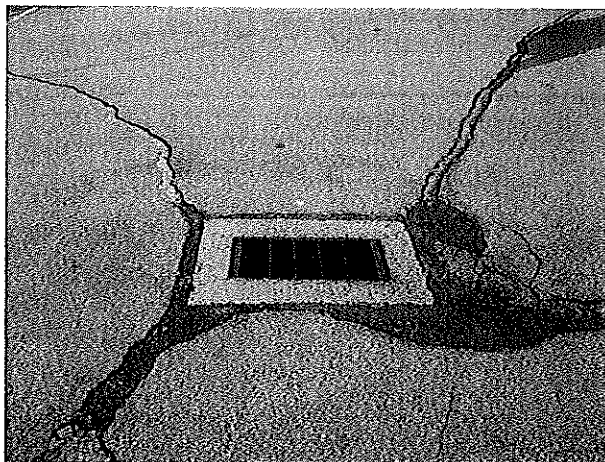
Prior to the Education Committee's forum on the Connecticut Technical High School System last month, many were probably led to believe that the CTHSS was operating smoothly. We thank you for the opportunity to illuminate the conditions in which we, and more importantly our students, must operate.

The two million dollars in SB 379 for maintenance and equipment provide a much needed addition to our system. Teaching at Ella Grasso every day makes me wonder if two million is sufficient. Everyday as I drive in I see a crumbling driveway and wonder about the impression it makes on parents who drive their students to school. As I have previously testified, every day I see ceiling tiles that have been removed and yet to be replaced. Every day I see desks that have been literally eaten away by termites. Every year we make requests to maintenance, as teachers throughout the system do for countless problems. Every year, maintenance lacks the funds to maintain these buildings.

While the crumbling of many of our facilities is evident to everyone, a much more insidious problem exists. Throughout our system, air quality problem

from mold to PCBs have been reported. While our superintendent responsibly moves from crisis to crisis, her actions are little more than a band-aid to cover a larger problem. There are buildings in our system that are far older and far less structurally sound than Ella T. Grasso, but no building can be preserved if there is no money available for necessary repairs or preventative maintenance. If the only time money can be found is for maintenance is for emergencies, then emergencies are inevitable. The buildings suffer, and the students suffer. Small repairs that cannot be made one year become huge, expensive repairs that have to be addressed the next. The money allotted for maintenance in SB 379 will help break the cycle of neglect.

Thank you for your attention to the needs of our system.



Sinking Catch Basin



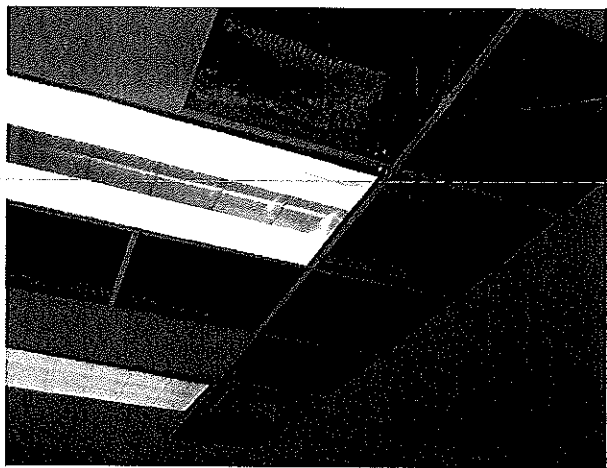
Driveway Crumbling



Erosion Catch Basin



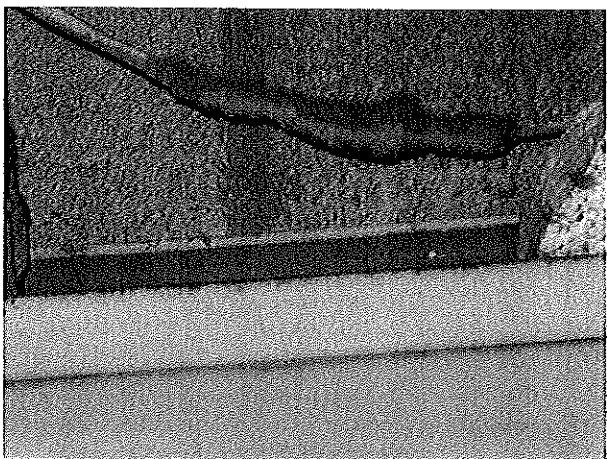
Close Up



Missing Tiles in Ceiling



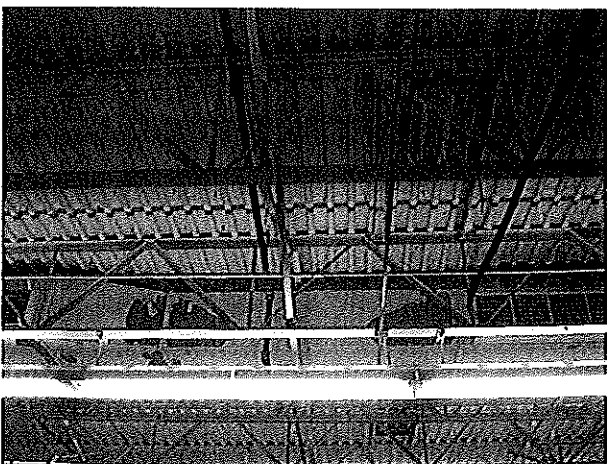
Dust Vent in Ceiling



Dust Collecting



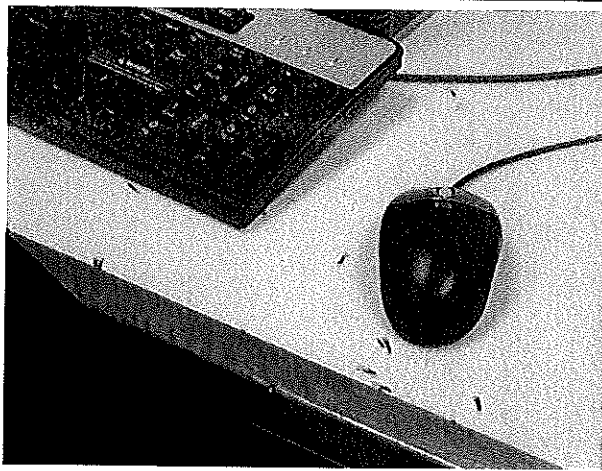
Broken Heaters



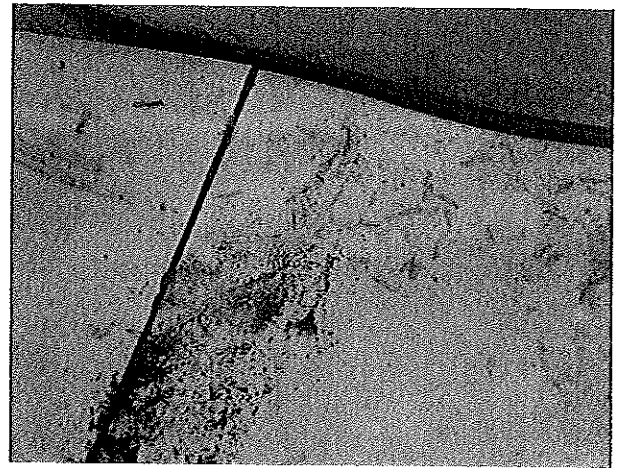
Duct Work and Vents Covered



Paint Peeling from Duct Work



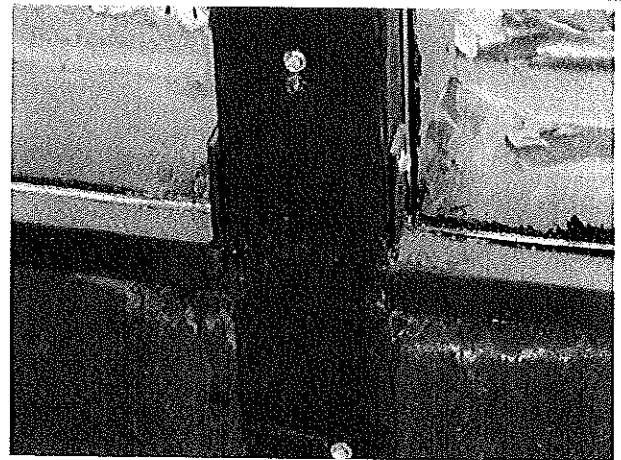
Bugs at Teacher Station



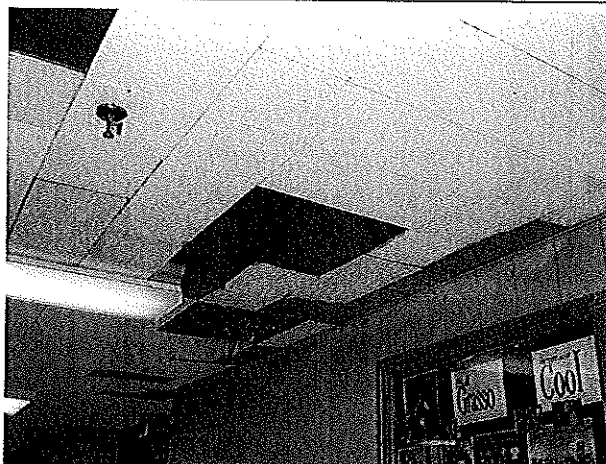
Termites eat table away



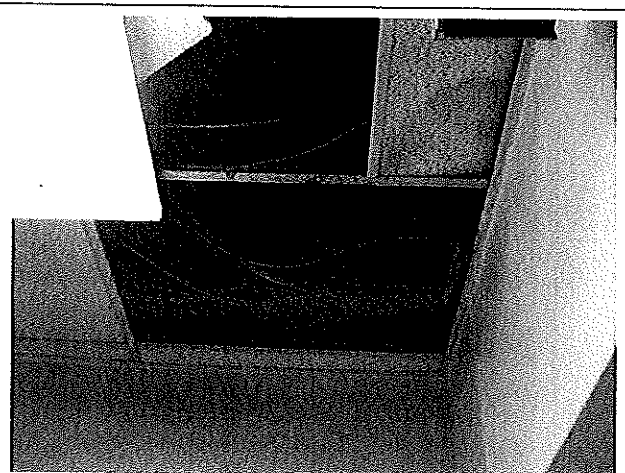
Rotting Window Sills



Rotting Window Frames



Metal Plates Replace Ceiling Tiles



Damaged Ceiling Tiles